

"Sandwich into draft Director's Note on tape -- send to Jack Blake and DDCI"

Of equal importance to promotion policy in any personnel management system is retention policy or the rights of individuals to job security. Our Agency rules on job security are quite clear and long-standing. I will list them below and in italics note any changes of emphasis or procedure which I am directing:

1. Probationary period: _____ establishes a three-year probationary period upon initial employment. It is important to the employee, as well as to the Agency, that this be carefully administered. It is the period in which the Agency has the opportunity and the responsibility to identify employees who are unlikely to satisfactorily adapt to Agency life. It is in their interest and the Agency's not to let what is likely to be an unfruitful relationship continue. It is my observation that the move from probationary to career status has been too perfunctory. We are going to establish a more formal approach to the crossing of the probationary threshold.

2. Unsuitability: The National Security Act of 1947/49 provides that the Director may "in his discretion, terminate the employment of any officer or employee of the Agency whenever he shall deem such termination necessary or advisable in the interests of the United States, but such termination shall not affect the right of such officer or employee to seek or accept employment in any other department or agency of the Government if declared eligible for such employment by the United States Civil Service

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Commission." Each Director interprets this authority individually. It has been my practice to exercise it for reasons of unreliability. When it is determined that an employee has performed in a manner that indicates a lack of willingness or ability to perform his or her duties in a manner consistent with authorized directives, oral or written, I must exercise this authority to dismiss from employment. Not to do so would be to jeopardize the reputation and the future of our Agency for the sake of an individual not willing to play on our Agency team.

3. Poor performance: stipulates that an individual ranked in the bottom three percent for two successive years may be considered for dismissal. We have recently instituted procedures whereby such cases will be reviewed by special panels to ensure objectivity. The panels will look for two situations:

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a. Incompetence: When an individual is performing below an acceptable level of competence, we have no other recourse than dismissal, as is the case in any government agency.

b. ~~Poorer performers~~ ^{People Under Fire}: When the needs of our service dictate reductions in force for reasons such as Congressionally mandated cuts in strength, abolishment of Agency functions, or excess strength in particular areas such that promotion opportunities are blocked, the panels will identify the least contributory personnel up to whatever percentage is required.

Note #1: Employees who reach a point three years from eligibility for retirement will not be dismissed as poorer performers.

Note #2: There are no sizeable externally or internally generated reductions foreseeable at this time.

4. Visibility: (1)(a) provides that employees may inquire of their supervisor as to their performance standing.

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It is my observation that this procedure has not been well carried out in the past. I believe that each employee is entitled to a frank and specific description of how his performance is being judged. Directives will be issued to ensure that employees can determine their performance rating. Equipped with knowledge of where he stands relative to his peers, no career employee need be concerned about dismissal as a result of a poor performance panel evaluation unless he or she is in the very lowest percentile. In short, there can be no concern at "arbitrary" dismissals -- the individual is entitled to know where he stands; and he is vulnerable to dismissal only if at the bottom of the list.

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5. establishes an annual evaluation system based on written fitness reports. There is considerable skepticism within the Agency that fitness reports are filled out conscientiously. We have a group studying ways in which to improve fitness report quality. In addition, instructions to panels will stress that

single fitness reports are not of great import; judgments
must be made on an entire career and what it tells about
potential for the future.